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SUBJECT: GREAT LAKES: TALKING POINTS FOR DECEMBER 17
BRIEFING

¶1. (U) This is an action request. USUN may draw from the points in para 2 and 3 during the UN Security Council consultations on the Great Lakes December 17.

¶2. Begin points:

-- I would like to thank UN Special Envoy Chissano for his briefing on the state of the Juba Peace Process and the current activity of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and for his dedication to the peace process.

-- First, the LRA must immediately end the war against innocent civilians it has waged for 22 years in four countries -- the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR), Uganda, and Sudan. This conflict has left 60,000 dead, up to 2 million displaced, and lead to thousands of abducted children across the region.

--The LRA continues to foment regional instability by committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, including gender-based violence, especially rape and other forms of sexual abuse; torture; mutilation; and the abduction and recruitment of children for use as soldiers and porters.

-- The United States demands that the LRA immediately put an end to its long history of war crimes and crimes against humanity. We also demand the LRA abide by provisions outlined in the Final Peace Agreement, including assembly in Ri-kwangba, Southern Sudan.

-- During the 22-year conflict, LRA rebels have killed over 60,000, up to two million have been displaced from their homes, and thousands of children have been abducted in the DRC, Central African Republic, Southern Sudan, and Uganda. In February and March of this year (2008) and while Kony requested a resumption of the peace talks, the LRA abducted 155 people in Central African Republic, including 55 children; and 97 were abducted in southern Sudan. These atrocities, combined with LRA leader Joseph Kony,s failure to participate in Juba Peace Process -related meetings, clearly demonstrates to the international community his refusal to support the Juba process. The LRA must stop committing these atrocities and release all children in their custody immediately.

-- The Juba process ended in late February, and LRA leader Joseph Kony,s refusal to participate in Juba-related meetings have clearly demonstrated he is not interested in peace. Joseph Kony has used the peace process to stall, regroup, and rearm the LRA. Given this lack of progress, we would welcome the UN Secretariat,s views on the long-term viability of the Envoy position.

-- We note the government of Uganda,s two year commitment to the Juba process through dialogue and negotiation, despite Kony,s repeated efforts to undermine this process.

-- The U.S. understands the ICC,s desire to arrest and capture Kony.

-- We support justice and accountability in the face of such heinous crimes.

-- The international community must make it very clear to the LRA that they must disarm and demobilize immediately.

-- The US Government will continue to encourage the region to cooperate to address the LRA regional threat.

-- Separate from the menace of the LRA is the critical issue of fostering genuine closure and reconciliation in Northern Uganda. The Government of Uganda must continue to capitalize upon the progress the Juba Process made in closing this chapter on the conflict and bringing relative peace to the north. The Government of Uganda and the international community must continue to support the Ugandan Government's Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan (PRDP) to rebuild the war-torn north. Support is also needed from the international community to improve northern infrastructure. We note for this fiscal year, the USG will provide \$163 million in PRDP support to open roads, provide health services, rebuild the agriculture sector, increases access to clean water, improve education, increase local government capacity, and reintegrate former combatants.

-- Northern Uganda,s communities need to feel their grievances are being addressed and that they are not being marginalized. The Northern Uganda Reconstruction Program needs a careful review to ensure it is accomplishing what it was intended to address.

13. (U) Contingency Guidance on Recent Military Action

In over twenty years, Kony and the LRA have terrorized the civilian populations of these three nations resulting in the deaths of more than 65,000, the displacement of more than 2.5 million people, and the abduction of more than 22,000 children.

We agree with other expert assessments that Kony and the LRA represented a real and growing threat to regional stability and to the internal stability of all three participating nations.

Like many other nations, the United States has been troubled by increasing reports that the LRA was reconstituting and strengthening its forces with the intent of further terrorizing innocent civilian populations.

As recently as last month the LRA attacked civilians in Congo, burning two villages and abducting more than 20 new child recruits.

The United States shares the view of the states in the region that the current peace process had failed.

Kony was given five opportunities to sign a final peace agreement with the Government of Uganda and he failed at each occasion to sign.

Kony has been using the peace process to rest, re-arm, and re-supply his army with the intention of expanding his reach.

The United State welcomes the cooperative efforts by regional states to take action against Joseph Kony and the Lord,s Resistance Army.

The LRA must now realize that there is no safe haven for its activities.

The only recourse open to the LRA is to accept immediately and without conditions the Ugandan government,s most recent peace offer.

RICE